

The jaguar hunters

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The Nahuatl text of this article is the edited outline of a farce produced by the Mayordomos of the major fiestas in an Indian village a day's walk from Chilapa, Guerrero. The bilingual informant, who had been the last director of this play, was around forty-five years old when the text was taped in 1963. I had chanced to see the last performance in December 1958. The informant had learned the parts by acting them for several years when he was in his early twenties and had then gone on to direct them when the man from whom he had learned them died. The play is no longer given because the Mayordomos are said to not be willing to spend the money on the costumes, masks, and food and drink which must be provided for the actors.

Several other dances seem to be dropping out for the same reason, *Los Mecos* and *Las Mulas* in particular. The much more elaborate and involved *Doce Pares* though, is still being given during the patron's fiesta in December.

It is of some interest to note that, in this story, the fabled Jaguar, so long an object of worship in Middle America, is reduced to a mere predator to be hunted down by foolish old men. The only remaining indication of the jaguar's power is the curing ability of its fat.

In bare summary, the play is about a pair of rich old men who employ hunters to kill a jaguar that has been decimating their cattle. After the animal is hunted down and killed, the hunters do not turn over the skin and the curative fat (which is especially important) to the rich men. Instead they attempt to sell it. The rich men discover their deceit and refuse to pay the peons wages. They are then driven off by the hunters.

Most of the comedy is provided by the acting. Examples of this are the stumbling, near blindness of the old men who are to be employed to hunt the jaguar; the exaggerated rolling about on the body of the jaguar by the hunters who are trying to absorb its

strength giving substance; the dancing of the dog which is about to go on the hunt; the chasing of the jaguar about the town; the rich men's accidental discovery of the hunters selling the jaguar fat and their running the rich men off with shotgun blasts. Other comic aspects are the use of nonsense words such as *tlacuani* (eater) for *tecuaní* (jaguar), *tota* for *tata* (father), *canana* (unknown). They also use unappropriated words such as paying with *ce totata* (one Our Father) or asking one to come *tetlalichtic* (sliding). The actors also speak in a very exaggerated tone of voice.

Beneath the simple story and the surface comedy, there is the perpetuation of cultural stereotypes, but with a wish fulfilling ending. The Indian is the bumpkin who tries to deceive the *catrín*. The twist comes at the end when the Indian succeeds in keeping his ill gotten gain and driving off the rich man by force.

Characteristic elements of mountain social organization are: employment for a short term or a specific task, and attempts by the poor to deceive the rich. In summary, there is the major theme that involvement with others gets one into trouble and that the best protection is to avoid involvement. This social distance is, in part, maintained by the formality of interpersonal relations, "first God and then yourself" and almost invariably, by a first refusal to all requests. The counter to refusal is usually a repetition of the original reasoning without adding new corollary reasons. It is more a wearing down than outwitting.

In the play, the interludes of formal dancing, before and after the hunt, were accompanied by a man playing the flute with a small drum suspended below it. The constitution of the twelve man cast would be of some interest to people given to deep analysis of oppositions. There are six pairs, beginning with the two rich men, *catrines* who would be distinguished from everyone else. Then there are the two chief hunters, Pablo Huehuentzin and Juan Porluceno, who are somewhat transitional persons with their Spanish names and relative power. They have guns and employ other people. There are the two animals, the jaguar and the dog. These are followed by six Indian "vaqueros" or peons. One pair is named for personal characteristics, Xocoyotzintli (last born son) and Tlacuaotlamatqui (angry); a second pair for occupations, Telpochtaminqui (boy hunter) and Oriador (milkier); and the third for plants, Soyualcohtli and Salvadorillo.

The Indianness of the hunters is further accentuated by their having only bows and arrows.

The play is presented around noon on the day before the fiesta, in front of the market place. It is viewed rather distantly by adults, while the children come close, are attentive and respond by laughing and by helping to chase the jaguar about.

TECUANTLAMINQUES

Rico: Tota Pablo Huehuentzin, xonhualatehua san tetotoca san tecoticic, nican timitznotza tota. (Repeated four times)

Pablo Huehuentzin: ¿Canon nechnotza? ¿Aquinon nechnotza? Tlapoyahuili tota, ¿tehuatzin tinechnotza?

Tlacatl: Ca tota, xnimitznotza. Ma, sequi necan tlaltzintlan mitznotza ihuan nican tlapac mitznotza.

Pablo Huehuentzin: Xmelac tlen otiquito. Tlacon ocsecan manitlanitihuetsi.

Rico I: ¿Aquinon techoncuitis?

Rico II: Cas tlacuani nitzin, san yehua tecoticic icuitlapil san techichiyactic, ye niman yehua yes tlacuani.

Pablo Huehuentzin: Aman niquitohuaya tota cas itla cotemetzontli ica ninocuitis hueli san tecuahuactic san tepipichtic tlaca imehuame nican nosehuitoque Señor Ricos. Tlapoyahuili tota.

Rico: Tlapoyahuili tota Pablo Huehuentzin. Xmosehui.

Pablo Huehuentzin: ¿Tlenon?, ¿tlen tinechnotza Señor Rico?

Rico: Tota Señor Pablo Huehuentzin amo xtlasocamati hueyi tlen ica timitznotza. Nican niconotza Dios ihuan después ica tehuatzin ¿titechchihuilis ce favor? ¿Tehua achi huel titlatlamicha; titechmichilis un tlacuani pampa nican quitlamitica tehuacaxhuan?

Pablo Huehuentzin: Xoc nihueli nitlamimi pampa nihuehuentzin. Xoc huel niao. Ahhh, san nihuehuentzin, xoc nixicua otli. Vaya, tla tichihuasque ce luchita, tla ticonana ticonasque ocnenca niquiyecos masque nihuehuentzin. Aver, pero xnechnotzchilica Juan Porluceno, ye cana nocompañero ihuan nitlatlamichane para ihuan tiasque aver tla ticasisque timichasque un tlacuani.

(Above scene repeated in calling of Juan Porluceno)

Rico: Señor tata Juan Porluceno nican ticonotza Dios ihuan después ica tehuatzin, nican mitztlatelhuilico tota Pablo Huehuentzin. Oquito te cana mocompañero cuali titlatlamicha, quilia imehuame intechimichilisque tlacuani tepetlatlapancan notecatenemi ica quitlamitica tohuacaxhuan.

Juan Porluceno: Ahh, Señor Rico, nehua xoc nihueli cana xoc mero nitlacha cana yonihuehuentzin, xoc nihueli niquistinimi xoc neca

THE JAGUAR HUNTERS

Rico: Father Pablo Huehuentzin, come here, come quickly, strongly, we call you here father. (Repeated four times)

Pablo Huehuentzin: Where am I called from? Who calls me? Good evening father, did you call me?

A man: No father I didn't call you. Some called you down there below and they called you here above.

Pablo Huehuentzin: What you said isn't true. In that case I'll rush off to ask elsewhere.

Rico I: Who bumped us?

Rico II: Perhaps the eater, partner, he's the only one with such a strong tail that smells so bad, it must have been the eater.

Pablo Huehuentzin: I thought that maybe it was a root I bumped, it's so hard and tough, but it's you all, here you are sitting, Señor Rico. Good evening fathers.

Rico: Good evening father Pablo Huehuentzin, sit down.

Pablo Huehuentzin: What is it? Why did you call me Señor Rico?

Rico: Father Señor Pablo Huehuentzin you will not be very grateful for the reason we call you. Father, here I call on God and then on you, will you do us a favor? Will you shoot an eater for us, because it is finishing off our cattle?

Pablo Huehuentzin: I can't shoot because I'm old. I can't go. Ahh, I'm an old man, I can't bear the road. Well, if we make an effort, we'll see if I'll get over there to get him, even though I'm an old man. But call Juan Porluceno for me, as he's my companion. With him, I'll shoot. With him we'll go to see if we'll shoot the eater.

(The previous scene is repeated in calling for Juan Porluceno)

Rico: Señor father Juan Porluceno here we speak first to God and then to you, father Pablo Huehuentzin came here to have you summoned. Your companion said you shoot well, he said you all will shoot the eater, that is lying about Split Mountain finishing off our cattle.

Juan Porluceno: Ahh, Señor Rico, I can't do it since I can't really see as I'm an old man. I can't go about, I can't go out there as I'm

niquisa cana ye nihuehuentzin. Pero, ehh, tlahun ye hualo in compañero yehun nechtlatelhuilito, aver lucha tichihuasque tla ticasisque in tlacuani. Aman quema technotzchilisque Xocoyotzintli para techhuiquilis itzcuintzin para ihuan titetemosque yehun tlacuani. Tiquitasque tla cuapehuis Xocoyotzintli nepa ipan Tepetlatlapancan, ipan un tlacoyo, ipan tepexiyo. Tiquitasque tla cuaquixtis yehun tecuani para neca ticontzacuilisque.

(Xocoyotzintli is found and brought to the Rich Men)

Rico: Tota Xocoyotzintli, nican mitznotza, mitztlatelhuilico tota Juan Porluceno quen mocompañero para ticuapehuis yehun tlacuani. Ticuicas motzcuintzin cuaquixtisque nepa ipan un Tepetlatlapancan un tlacuani pampa nican iquitlamitica tohuacaxhuan yehuin tlacuani. Pos aman yehuin masque timechtlatlahuisque.

(Turns to Pablo Huehuentzin) Tota Pablo Huehuentzin aman quema yotintzque Xocoyotzintli. Quema quitohua nochipa nechcompañeros cuapehuisque yehun tlacuani. Aman tota, ¿quequich titlanis?

Pablo Huehuentzin: Pos tota nitlanis san quequich tehua tiquitos.

Rico: Tota Pablo Huehuentzin, timizmacasque ce culebra tomin ihuan ce canana ihuan ce talega ihuan ce totata.

Pablo Huehuentzin: Tota Señor Rico, nictlanis tomin para icon nechaxilia para Xocoyotzintli ica nochi compañeros ocseque novaqueros aquinon quen cuapehuisque in tlacuani neca ipanon Tepetlatlapancan.

Rico: Aman quema matitocuicatican matiquitotican totzcuintzin matlamahuiso pueblo cuadrilla.

II

Vaqueros: ¡Oosca, oosca, oosca!

Chichi: ¡Hua, hua, hua!

Vaquero: Ándale Xocoyotzintli, nicanca xcuahuica totzcuitzin, nican nemi tlacuani.

Tecuani: ¡Ahuuu, ahuuu!

Xocoyotzintli: Pablo Huehuentzin, amo timichas totzcuintzin.

III

Vaquero I: Tota tla tiquita yonicmaac tecuani.

Vaquero II: Tota nican nicmaac.

Vaquero III: Ma nehua nicmaac.

Vaquero IV: Ehh, nochi onitlatoponili, ma ye nican nicmaac, nehua nican cuamana nican onimichac, nehua achtopa nicmaac.

Vaquero I: Nican xconquechili cuchillo, conxotla nican. Nican chapani icuetlatxli, nepa manicchapani cuetlatxli.

already an old man. But, eh, if this companion has come, if he went to summon me, well, we'll make an effort, we'll see if we get the eater. Now we'll call Xocoyotzintli to bring us his dog so he'll go hunting for the eater with us. We'll see if Xocoyotzintli will come to a drive there on Split Mountain, in the woods, on the peaks. We'll see if he can get this eater out so we can ambush him.

(Xocoyotzintli is found and brought to the Rich Men)

Rico: Father Xocoyotzintli, you are called on, you are summoned by your companion Juan Porluceno to drive this eater. Bring your dog so they will get the eater there in Split Mountain because he has been finishing off our cattle. Do it even if we have to pay you.

(Turns to Pablo Huehuentzin) Father Pablo Huehuentzin now we've talked to Xocoyotzintli. He said he'll always accompany us to drive his eater. Now Father how much do you want?

Pablo Huehuentzin: Well, Father, I'll take whatever you say.

Rico: Father, Pablo Huehuentzin, we'll give you one money belt, and one "canana". One bag of money and one Our Father.

Pablo Huehuentzin: Father Señor Rico, I accept the money so that I'll have enough for Xocoyotzintli, my companions and my herders who will come to drive the eater there in Split Mountain.

Rico: Now let's sing and make the dog dance to divert the people.

PART II

Herders: Oosca, oosca, oosca!

Dog: Hua, hua, hua!

Herder: Get going Xocoyotzintli, bring your dog here, here's the eater.

Eater: Ahuuuuu, ahuuuuu!

Xocoyotzintli: Pablo Huehuentzin, don't shoot my dog.

PART III

Herder No. 1: Father, you can see I've hit the eater.

Herder No. 2: Father, I hit it here.

Herder No. 3: Ah, I hit it.

Herder No. 4: Ehh, I shot it everywhere. I hit it here, I shot it here, I hit it first.

Herder No. 1: Put the knife here, slit it here, Cut it's hide here. I'll flay it here.

Vaquero II: Compañero, maticuayectitehuetzican in tecuani, nican xapani icuetlaxtli, nican manitlachpani cuetlaxtli.

Vaquero III: ¡Haaa, haaa!

Xocoyotzintli: Tota, aman para chichahuis nochichitzin niquixtilis yehun chahualis para achi nicmatlalotihuetzis.

Rico: Tehua tota Pablo Huehuentzin, ándale.

Pablo Huehuentzin: Pues Señor Rico, nican yoticasisque tlacuani, yotimichaque, quema tla ticoncelis xceliti.

Rico: Señor Pablo Huehuentzin, nican nicnotza Dios ihuan después ica tehuatzin aman quema yunca. Quema te, maninomatlalotihuetzi. Mantitomatlalocan, yehui chahualis cuali para riñones, para tomiyo. Achi cualo notzincocax, maniomatlalotihuetzi asta achi nipatis, nicasis valor.

Vaquero I: Tota Pablo Huehuentzin, xmomatlalotihuetzi para ti-chichahuas.

Xocoyotzintli: Noxquimatlalo totzcuintzin Maravilla para achi chichahuis para ocsepa techpalehuis ocsepa ihuan conacisque tecuani, machichichahui totzcuintzin.

Pablo Huehuentzin: Aman quema tota Señor Rico, yoticasisque tote-cuantzin, aman quema nican nemi intlacuane, quema xcelique. Aman quema xotlami mohuacaxtin. Nican quema xtlacasomati motlaxtla-huiltzin, xtlaxtlahuas ce talega tomin ihuan ce canana ihuan ce cullebra ihuan ce totata.

Rico: Amantzin nias, niconcuis notomin, ¡manihuiya te!

(Rico's leave)

Pablo Huehuentzin: Aman quema Xocoyotzintli xmomatlalo totzcuintzin. Aman quema huan tehua noxmomatlalo para icon tichichahuis ihuan ica ocsepa ticonnacisque yehuin tlacuani achi tixicos tihuatlapehuis ipanon Tepetlatlapancan Tepetlatzayancan. Nochi compañeros mamotlalocan nican ipampa yehuin tlacuani tiyectisque ihuan sequime inquitquisque yehuin chahualistli ihuan tla neca oc-sequeime inquitquisque tota.

IV

Rico: Tota Pablo Huehuentzin, xhualatehuacan san tetotoca san tecuahuaactic, nican timechnotza. Tota Pablo Huehuentzin, xhualatehua san tetlalichtic can timechnotza. Soyalcotli xhualatehua san tetotoca san tecuahuaactic, nican timitznotza.

Soyalcotli: ¿Tlenon, tota Señor Rico? ¿Tlenon motlanahuatiltzin?

Herder No. 2: Companion, hurry and come to skin this eater. Cut it's skin here, here I'll cut it's hide.

Herder No. 3: Haaa, haaa!

Xocoyotzintli: Father, now to make my dog stronger I'll take this fat to rub him.

Rico: You Father Pablo Huehuentzin, get on with it.

Pablo Huehuentzin: Well Señor Rico, here we've gotten the eater. We've already shot him, if you're going to receive him then receive him.

Rico: Señor Father Pablo Huehuentzin, here I call on God and then yourself, this is enough. I'm going to rub myself with fat. Rub yourselves, this fat is good for the kidneys, for the bones. My back hurts a little, I'll rub it until I have strength.

Herder No. 1: Father Pablo Huehuentzin, quickly rub yourself to make yourself strong.

Xocoyotzintli: Also rub your dog, Marvel, so he will get strong too, so he can help us catch the eater again. Make your dog much stronger.

Pablo Huehuentzin: Now Father Rico, we've already caught your eater, here he is, receive him. Now your cattle won't be finished off. Now give your gift; give a bag of money, a canana; a money belt and an Our Father.

Rico: Now I'm going, I'll bring my money, so long!

(The Rich Men leaves)

Pablo Huehuentzin: Rub your dog now Xocoyotzintli. You rub yourself, too, so we can catch the eater again; so you will endure the drive on Split Mountain, on the Cut Up Mountain. Everyone rub themselves here because we're going to skin this eater and some are going to carry this fat and perhaps the others will sell it.

PART IV

Rico: Father Pablo Huehuentzin, come here quickly. We're calling you here. Father Pablo Huehuentzin, come sliding when we call you. Soyalsohtli, come quickly, here we call you.

Soyalsohtli: What is it Father Señor Rico? What is your errand?

Rico: Tota Señortzin Soyalsohtli, nican timitznotza, nican techilis favorcito, intechonnochilisque tota Pablo Huehuentzin para cuaselis itomin nican pampa tehuame noyetiahue pampa notipia tequitl ica ocsequei señores. Nicanca tiquintlaxtlahuisque asta xtitaxilia tiquintlaxtlahuisque nochi tlaquehualtin pampa nican amantzin timactilisque intomin.

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Pablo Huehuentzin: Nican telpochtli ándale xcuhua. ¿Tlen ticnequi? Cuetlaxtli tlacuani noso yehui chahualis para ica momatlalo tla achi san incuacualo. Nican nochi unca para ica momatlalosque nochi telpocame, ichpocame. Ye san cuacualo inquinamaquiltisque para achi ica totonyasque pampa yehuin cualunca chahualis intlacuani. *Rico:* Tota Pablo Huehuentzin, ¿tlenon quinamacatoque?

Pablo Huehuentzin: (Not recognizing Rico) ¿Eh? Nican, Señor, san tlen mach ticonnmacatoque nican chahualis, cuetlaxtli, nochi san tlen ticnequis, nochi unca nican. Tla ticnequi chahualis para motzinco-caxtzin ica timalahui ica tipatiz.

Rico: Tlaca imehuame, Pablo Huehuentzin, icon quichitinemi, titlachtequi. Yetomechtlaqueque quen techaxilisque un tlacuani ihuan tanto tomin otechquixtilique quenequi miac otimechtlaxtlahuique ihuan nican inquinamacatoque. Umpon quixtique nochi tlen ica totomin timechtlaqueque ihuan ye nican inquixtique miac yehuin chahualis nochi incuetlaxtli. ¡Nican inquinamacatoque! ¿Tlacain tehuame tohuaxca, ye xoctimechaxiltilisque tomin?

Pablo Huehuentzin: Tota, pero yehuin nican yehuecao ticmacatine-mi. Ca tota, Señor Rico, nican ye niman in tohuaxca.

Rico: Xocnimitztlaxtlao, xocnimechaxiltilisque, tota. Ye cuali, aman san icon umpa nocahua yehuin quequich yotimechmacaque, ye cuali, tota Pablo Huehuentzin, xoctimechaxiltilisque.

Pablo Huehuentzin: ¿Aquinon quitohua? ¿Aquinon quitohua xnechtlaxtlahuilis? Amantzin tiquitasque. Ah, Señor Rico, yehuin novariya xaca nechquixtili, aman nimitzmaags macuili balazos nican.

(Rico runs off and Pablo Huehuentzin fires his shotgun)

Pablo Huehuentzin: Aman quema, nehua xocninocalactis, xaca nechhuatlaquehuas. Tla Señor Rico ocsepa quinequis nicontlamichilis aman xocninocalactis, yenihuehuentzin. Aman tla ticnequi ica paquilistli matitocuatican.

Rico: Father Señor Soyalcotli, here we call you. Do us a favor. Call Father Pablo Huehuentzin to receive his money because we're leaving since we have business with other gentlemen. Here, we'll pay them until we have no more, we'll pay all the peons. Here, right now, we'll turn over the money.

PART V

Pablo Huehuentzin: Come on boy, buy it here. What do you want? Eater skin or this fat with which to rub yourself if you're sick. Here is all you need for rubbing yourselves, boys and girls, if you are sick; they are going to sell it so you can warm yourself because this is good eater fat.

Rico: Father Pablo Huehuentzin, what are they selling?

Pablo Huehuentzin: (Not recognizing Rico) Eh? Here, Señor, they are selling fat, skin, everything you might want. It's all here if you want to cure your back by rubbing fat on it.

Rico: So it's you, Pablo Huehuentzin. This is what you go about doing, you're a thief. Here we've already employed you and so much money you've taken from us. How much we gave you, and here you're selling. There, you took all our money to hire you and here, you're taking all this fat, all the hide. You're selling it here! So it's your's, the money wasn't enough?

Pablo Huehuentzin: But Father, we've been trying to sell this for a long time. Señor Rico, this is ours.

Rico: I'm not going to pay you. I'm not going to complete the payment, Father. Fine, you can have what I've given you, but I'm not going to complete the payment, Father Pablo Huehuentzin.

Pablo Huehuentzin: Who says so? Who says they're not going to pay me? Now we'll see. Ah, Señor Rico, no one has taken this stick from me. Now I'll shoot you five times.

(Rico runs off and Pablo Huehuentzin fires his shotgun)

Pablo Huehuentzin: Alright, I'm not going to get involved. No one is going to hire me. If Señor Rico wants me to go shooting again, I'm not going to commit myself. I'm an old man. Now if you want to, let's dance with joy.

